



Governor's Subcabinet on International Affairs

Annual Report to the Governor

Prepared by
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Secretary of State

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2021 Report Highlights

The major international highlights for the State of Maryland in the year of 2021 were:

- On Feb. 4, 2021, over 100 people attended the 40th Anniversary (virtual) Celebration of the Maryland-Anhui Sister State including Governor Hogan, Lt. Governor Rutherford, Party Secretary Li as well as Governor Li. Representatives from the Chinese Embassy in D.C. attended.
- At the inaugural Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill OSOS hosted representatives from the Embassy of New Zealand, Japan, France, and Mexico. Ross Peddicord, Executive Director of the Maryland Horse Industry Board and member of the Host Organizing Committee for the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill, reported on the impact from the inaugural event Oct. 14-17, 2021: "From all aspects the event is a game changer for the Maryland horse industry. It showed that the state could organize and produce one of the most sought-after equestrian events in the world and showcased the sweeping environmentally protected 5,600 acres of Fair Hill. Over 20,000 spectators attended the event. which featured 46 competitors from the U.S. and five foreign countries--England, France, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. Foreign competitors included the leading 3-Day event rider in the world, Oliver Townend, and Zara Tindall, the Olympic medal-winning granddaughter of Queen Elizabeth II."
- A delegation led by Vice President Decoster of Hauts-de-France Region visited Maryland for 2 days in October. This was the first visit from an Hauts-de-France official since the signing of the Sister State MOU in December 2020. He and his delegation met with Lt. Governor Rutherford Secretary Wobensmith and Secretary Schulz. They visited the UMBC Training Centers' Cybersecurity Academy, the University of Maryland's Center for Global Programs, and the Maryland Commerce Office of Tourism. Ambassador Etienne hosted the delegation and the Lt. Governor for a reception at his residence in Washington, D.C.
- On November 30th, the Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) and the Anhui Equestrian Association signed an Agreement during a virtual signing ceremony hosted from Annapolis. The goal of the Agreement is to jointly cultivate equestrian industry exchanges and to build a horse industry cluster integrating horse breeding, horse products, horse tourism culture, equestrian training, and horse sport events.
- The Maryland Department of Commerce's Office of International Investment and Trade was awarded the 2021 President's "E-Star" Award for Export Service for its significant contributions to increasing U.S. exports, as well as its leadership in spearheading nearly two dozen international trade missions for the state in recent years.
- In November, seven Maryland companies joined Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford and the Maryland Department of Commerce on a trip to MEDICA 2021 in Germany, the world's largest medical trade show. This event marked the official return of in-person trade shows for the department, after a hiatus of 22 months due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Maryland's Secretary of Higher Education, Dr. James D. Fielder, is working with the Department of Commerce International Division, the Secretary of State, and several colleges and universities to facilitate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the Anhui Ministry of Education, Anhui Province, People's Republic of China.

- Under the statewide incident command and in partnership with other state agencies, to date, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) supported (and continues to support) various activities related to Operation Allies Welcome including initiating health exams for 364 Afghan humanitarian immigrants through existing clinical partnerships and connecting medically fragile Afghan humanitarian immigrants staying at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda, MD to Medicaid, maternity care, and vaccinations.
- MDA continued to support the sales of Maryland beer and spirits in the Canadian market with funding from the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA). Working with an in-market consultant, MDA undertook a digital media campaign for two breweries and one distillery selling in the Ontario market. This program did better than expected and promoted the three products to consumers. MDA also created a program to introduce new breweries and distilleries into the market by providing influencers with products to review.
- MDA helped to organize the SUSTA pavilion at the 2021 ANUGA trade show in Cologne, Germany. ANUGA is the largest trade show in the world and takes place every two years in October. With strict COVID-19 regulations, ANUGA welcomed visitors and offered a venue for face-to-face meetings, tastings, and sales. Space within the SUSTA pavilion was limited but included two Maryland-based companies. Although attendance was much lower than in past years, hosting a successful show was a major accomplishment.
- Secretary Grumbles' visit to the United Nation's Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland to discuss climate policy with policy makers from around the world.
- UN COP 26 Commissioner Birrane was asked by the NAIC to be one of its representatives on a panel sponsored by the United Nations' Environmental Program and, specifically, the UN-Convened Principles for Sustainable Insurance. Commissioner Birrane overviewed the development of regulatory best practices approaches for both climate-related financial risk for insurers from a solvency perspective and climate risk mitigation driven by insurers in underwriting and risk financing. Commissioner Birrane also had an opportunity to address on a global platform what Maryland and the Hogan Administration are doing at the local level to mitigate climate-related risks and promote adaptation and resilience.
- Building on the success of A Baltimore Port of Entry Case Study trade conference, Commissioner O. Felix Obi helped facilitate a trade and investment Working Group to facilitate two-way trade and investment between Maryland businesses and African Union member states. As a first major outcome, Mr. Jordan Kayloe, Director, Air Service Development at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, led the effort to establish an Air Senegal flight from BWI Marshall Airport (through JFK) to Dakar, Senegal, a key West Africa trade hub. The Air Senegal flight has also strengthened employment at BWI Airport and enhanced the quality of international travel for Marylanders.
- TAG traveled to Split, Croatia the week of 27 September to 1 October to attend the annual Adriatic Five (A-5, also known as the Adriatic Charter: Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, BiH, Montenegro, with Serbia, Slovenia, and Kosovo as observers).
- BG Adam Flasch attended the Northern Europe ChoD conference in Helsinki, Finland 29-30 September 2021. This annual meeting represents 12 European countries and is a platform for discussing the security environment of the Baltic Sea and Northern Europe while promoting dialogue and mutual understanding.

Background

Purpose of Subcabinet:

In accordance with the Executive Order 01.01.2005.24 (May 11, 2005), the Governor's Subcabinet on International Affairs is tasked to convene on a quarterly basis to coordinate and collaborate on the international activities of the State. In addition, the Subcabinet is tasked to develop, evaluate and coordinate a cohesive international strategy in order to enhance the state's competitiveness and stature in the global marketplace and international arena. In 2021, the Subcabinet convened four times: January 21, April 21, July 21, and October 20, 2021.

Membership of Subcabinet:

Chaired by the Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith, members of the Subcabinet are:

1. Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford
2. Kelly Schulz, Secretary of the Department of Commerce
3. Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture
4. Greg Slater, Secretary of the Department of Transportation
5. Dr. James D. Fielder, Jr., Secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission
6. Ben Grumbles, Secretary of the Department of the Environment

The following agencies have participated in the Subcabinet meetings either at the invitation of Secretary Wobensmith or at the department's request:

1. Governor's Office of Community Initiatives
2. Maryland Department of Health
3. Maryland Insurance Administration
4. Maryland Military Department
5. Maryland State Department of Education
6. Maryland Department of Human Services
7. Governor's Office of Small, Minority, & Women Business Affairs
8. Maryland Department of Planning
9. World Trade Center Institute
10. Governor's Federal Office

Agency Reports

Office of Secretary of State

Key accomplishments:

- On Feb. 4, 2021, over 100 people attended the 40th Anniversary (virtual) Celebration of the Maryland-Anhui Sister State including Governor Hogan, Lt. Governor Rutherford, Party Secretary Li as well as Governor Li. Representatives from the Chinese Embassy in D.C. attended.
- Maryland and Anhui Province are drafting an MOU on higher education engagement, exchange, and training. The Maryland working group includes representation from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) (the lead institution), Maryland Commerce, OSOS, Goucher College, Salisbury University, and the University of Maryland College Park.

- At the inaugural Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill OSOS hosted representatives from the Embassy of New Zealand, Japan, France, and Mexico.
- The University of Mpumalanga in South Africa is partnering with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore on education exchange on food security and professional training for agriculture students. This is still in an initial phase; however, the South African embassy is facilitating the connection. The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is also supporting the initiative.
- Together, Maryland and the Hauts-de-France Region hosted a 4-part life science webinar series in May 2021. It focused on introducing the Hauts-de-France economic ecosystem to Maryland's business community and the basics of FDI in Maryland and the USA.
- Sixty-two entrepreneurs in the Sister State of Piura, Peru attended a virtual presentation by Jessica Reynolds, Senior Director of the Office of International Investment and Trade, promoting Maryland's new Soft-Landing Program,
- Secretary of State John Wobensmith signed an MOU with the Salvadoran ambassador to train consulate staff on identifying and assisting victims of domestic violence. This is the second international training agreement for the OSOS Safe at Home/Address Confidentiality Program.
- Kanagawa Sister State Committee hosted three webinars between UMBC Japanese language students and Kanagawa high school students studying the English language to promote second language learning. The UMBC students produced a Maryland promotional video in Japanese to share with the Kanagawa Sister State Community.
- The Maryland-Kanagawa Sister State Committee organized the Japan Day fall festival on October 10th in Columbia. Christina Poy, Administrative Director of the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, and Angela Cabello from County Executive Bell's office made remarks. The event reached maximum participation with 300 guests and included several cultural performances and an exhibit hall.
- Secretary Wobensmith, Mendy Nitsch, Senator Cardin and Senator Van Hollen attended the dedication of a friendship bridge in Salisbury. The Mayor of Salisbury and the Estonian Ambassador attended, as did representatives of the Maryland-Estonia Sister States committee and Salisbury-Tartu Sister City representatives.
- A delegation led by Vice President Decoster of Hauts-de-France Region visited Maryland for 2 days in October. This was the first visit from an Hauts-de-France official since the signing of the Sister State MOU in December 2020. He and his delegation met with Lt. Governor Rutherford Secretary Wobensmith and Secretary Schulz. They visited the UMBC Training Centers' Cybersecurity Academy, the University of Maryland's Center for Global Programs, and the Maryland Commerce Office of Tourism. Ambassador Etienne hosted the delegation and the Lt. Governor for a reception at his residence in Washington, D.C.
- On November 30th, the Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) and the Anhui Equestrian Association signed an Agreement during a virtual signing ceremony hosted from Annapolis. The goal of the Agreement is to jointly cultivate equestrian industry exchanges and to build a horse industry cluster integrating horse breeding, horse products, horse tourism culture, equestrian training, and horse sport events.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- France
- China

- South Africa

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- Sign the Maryland-Anhui Sister State Higher Education MOU and host a joint virtual education forum.
- In-person celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Maryland-Kanagawa Japan Sister State relationship in Annapolis with Governors Kuroiwa and Hogan.
- Expand OSOS and Sister States of Maryland, Inc. presence at the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill.
- Host a delegation from Hauts-de-France, including representatives from the higher education, cybersecurity, life sciences, and horse industries.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

The return to in-person meetings picked up significantly in the Fall of 2021. In October there were two foreign delegations that visited Maryland. The OSOS and International Programs activities have continued without much delay however, international travel is still slightly restricted for some countries.

Maryland Department of Commerce

Key accomplishments:

In June, at the 2021 SelectUSA Investment Summit, Commerce officially launched the Maryland Soft Landing Program, a new program to match international prospects with local incubators throughout the state. Soft landing programs provide companies the opportunity to test out new markets at an affordable rate, with access to business resources, educational programs, mentors, and advisors, and/or networking events.

The Maryland Department of Commerce's Office of International Investment and Trade was awarded the 2021 President's "E-Star" Award for Export Service for its significant contributions to increasing U.S. exports, as well as its leadership in spearheading nearly two dozen international trade missions for the state in recent years.

Awarded by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the E-Star Award is the highest recognition any U.S. entity can receive for making a significant contribution to the expansion of U.S. exports.

In November, seven Maryland companies joined Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford and the Maryland Department of Commerce on a trip to MEDICA 2021 in Germany, the world's largest medical trade show. This event marked the official return of in-person trade shows for the department, after a hiatus of 22 months due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- United Kingdom
- Germany
- East Asia (Japan and South Korea)

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- The Office of International Investment and Trade has 6 in-person trade shows scheduled for 2022, including Arab Health in Dubai in January, Singapore International Water Week in April, and Africa Aerospace and Defense in September.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- To address the challenges exporters in Maryland, face due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maryland Department of Commerce transformed its usual trade show and mission schedule to a series of virtual opportunities for companies. Virtual missions have allowed Maryland exporters to continue taking advantage of opportunities to sell their products and services in new markets, even during the pandemic emergency.

Maryland Department of Transportation

Key accomplishments:

The Maryland Department of Transportation participated in a tele-conference call with representatives of Ontario Province and the Canadian Embassy to discuss experiences and lessons learned in working on transportation related P3 projects. We exchanged information and ideas and committed to scheduling a follow-up call to discuss more specific topics of mutual interest. This was the second call, which was a follow-up to an introductory discussion that took place in June of 2021. The discussion was related to the joint agreement signed by the Province of Ontario Premier and Governor Hogan late in 2020.

Port Activity

Over the last year, the majority of which was under COVID restrictions, the Port of Baltimore had no overseas travel and little domestic travel. We have received visitors from Europe, but most customers still have some travel restrictions. We anticipate this changing in 2022 as several customers are starting to reach out to make travel plans for the new year.

The Port of Baltimore never closed in 2019 and 2020, as cargo operations continued all throughout the pandemic. Containers and forest products had good growth, year over year and exceeded pre-pandemic numbers for shipment volumes into Baltimore.

Autos and Ro-Ro high & heavy units (farm and construction) showed strong growth early but due to the microchip problem all Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) have reduced forecasts moving forward into 2022.

Cruises have resumed from the Port of Baltimore, as Carnival has resumed sailing with strong support from their loyal customers. Royal Caribbean will start up again with cruise ships departing the Port beginning in December 2021.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- Europe: Germany
- Asia: China and South Korea
- Mexico

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- The major goal is continued growth of the port exemplified by project focus to boost capacity to handle larger container ships (Post Panamax Berth enhancements), Ensuring long term dredge placement capacity, and increase rails access (Howard Street Tunnel/Intermodal facility upgrades). Given international conditions allow it in 2022, the MDOT MPA/Port of Baltimore will try to host an Auto Conference in August 2022 focused on finish vehicles and auto logistics.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- The pandemic has resulted in restricted travel making it more difficult to conduct normal business activities. Many international conferences have been canceled making it more difficult to build additional trade relationships. However, issues at other ports in the U.S. has resulted in some additional opportunities to grow some cargo shipments through the port of Baltimore more recently.

Maryland Higher Education Commission

Key accomplishments:

Maryland's Secretary of Higher Education, Dr. James D. Fielder, is working with the Department of Commerce International Division, the Secretary of State, and several colleges and universities to facilitate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the Anhui Ministry of Education, Anhui Province, People's Republic of China.

A partnership between the Anhui Provincial People's Government and the State of Maryland has been ongoing as a Sister State partnership through the Sister Cities International program since 1980, with four decades of strategic partnerships providing commercial, governmental, educational, and cultural exchange between Maryland and China.

Maryland higher education institutions are critical to the success of this partnership and will provide real outcomes for Maryland students traveling abroad, as well as for the students from China studying in Maryland.

The partnering institutions include:

- University of Maryland, College Park
- Salisbury University
- Goucher College
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County

The MOU will include, but is not limited to, expanding and growing the already established higher education strategic partnerships, promoting specific learning outcomes in higher education, and strengthening ties between higher education and industry in Maryland and Anhui.

The MOU is part of a larger Anhui/Maryland Higher Education Symposium scheduled for December of 2021, which will offer an opportunity to further strengthen our partnership regarding global cooperation.

Maryland's Higher Education Secretary, Dr. James D. Fielder participated in the Maryland International Education Consortium's (MIEC) annual Maryland International Education Day as the opening speaker during their April 2021 event. The Theme was Post-COVID Collaborations in International Education. Secretary Fielder spoke about how the pandemic impacted global education and discussed ways for Maryland higher education institutions to prepare for a new vision of global education, including enhanced virtual classroom opportunities. He applauded Maryland higher education institution leadership for their ability to adapt so quickly and for implementing the use of hybrid and virtual online teaching techniques that deliver academic programs both in the United States and abroad.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission also partnered with Goucher College to celebrate its ongoing commitment to global education and attended its Global Changemaker Meeting. The event was hosted by the Office of Global Education and discussion centered on global efforts to prepare Maryland students to face the complex issues of their generation.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- Anhui Province, People's Republic of China

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- Secretary Fielder looks forward to new opportunities that may result from the Anhui/Maryland Higher Education Symposium, as well as working with the Secretary of State and the Department of Commerce to promote global higher education initiatives.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- MHEC continues to act as a statewide coordinator for higher education to support Maryland's postsecondary institutions and ensure they were able to continue providing high quality educational opportunities in a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff. This includes organized and ongoing discussions to coordinate responses and offer options for students enrolled in International Study Programs.

Maryland State Department of Education

Key accomplishments:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recognizes the need for a bilingual workforce to give Maryland an economic advantage in the global marketplace. Maryland public schools continue to award the Seal of Biliteracy to students who have high proficiency in English and another language. In 2021, 2488 Maryland graduating seniors were awarded the Seal of Biliteracy in 22 local school systems.

State Superintendent Mohammed Choudhury is chair of the Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools, established by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. MSDE will develop and implement a statewide strategy to promote an asset-based approach for multilingual learners. Recommendations also address language teacher shortages and propose Maryland bilingual education certification.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- International delegations of educators have not requested visits to MSDE.

Maryland Department of Health

Key accomplishments:

Under the statewide incident command and in partnership with other state agencies, to date, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) supported (and continues to support) various activities related to Operation Allies Welcome including initiating health exams for 364 Afghan humanitarian immigrants through existing clinical partnerships and connecting medically fragile Afghan humanitarian immigrants staying at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda, MD to Medicaid, maternity care, and vaccinations.

In partnership with local health departments and Federally Qualified Health Centers, MDH vaccinated ~1200 migrant/seasonal/agricultural workers (many of whom originated from countries in Central America or Haiti) against COVID-19 as part of the state's COVID-19 prevention efforts.

MDH provided culturally informed and language-accessible health screening services to ~700 humanitarian immigrants representing over 30 different countries who made Maryland their new home.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- Afghanistan
- Central America
- Cameroon

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- MDH will work closely with existing clinical and community-based partners, as well as develop new partnerships, to increase access and to ensure that newly arrived immigrant populations are connected to needed culturally informed and language-accessible health services. In 2022, MDH, in partnership with the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, will co-host an international panel to discuss COVID-19 pandemic best practices in reaching diverse populations (e.g., minority, LEP, immigrant, migrant worker, etc. groups).

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- Many public health educational and outreach activities, typically delivered in-person, continued to be supported through virtual platforms. However, access to technology required for virtual health education is not uniform across the communities MDH serves and as such, the ability to reach everyone was limited.

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Key accomplishments:

MDA continued to support the sales of Maryland beer and spirits in the Canadian market with funding from the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA). Working with an in-market consultant, MDA undertook a digital media campaign for two breweries and one distillery selling in the Ontario market. This program did better than expected and

promoted the three products to consumers. MDA also created a program to introduce new breweries and distilleries into the market by providing influencers with products to review.

The Maryland Horse Industry Board is part of the Maryland Department of Agriculture and helped to organize and promote the inaugural Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill. This event is one of only seven international 5 Star events in the Olympic equestrian discipline of 3 Day Eventing which combines the discipline of dressage, cross country riding and show jumping.

Ross Peddicord, executive director of the Maryland Horse Industry Board and member of the Host Organizing Committee for the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill, reported on the impact from the inaugural event Oct. 14-17, 2021: "From all aspects the event is a game changer for the Maryland horse industry. It showed that the state could organize and produce one of the most sought-after equestrian events in the world and showcased the sweeping environmentally-protected 5,600 acres of Fair Hill. Over 20,000 spectators attended the event. which featured 46 competitors from the U.S. and five foreign countries-- England, France, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. Foreign competitors included the leading 3-Day event rider in the world, Oliver Townend, and Zara Tindall, the Olympic medal-winning granddaughter of Queen Elizabeth II."

Maryland Public Television produced 16 hours of coverage and the feed was sent to many European countries attracting a global audience. The Maryland Sister States program arranged for diplomats from four foreign countries--New Zealand, France, Japan, and Mexico-- to attend along with Secretary of State John Wobensmith and Deputy Secretary Luis Borunda. Both the Governor and Lt. Governor participated in the event and expressed their continuing support.

The success of the event catapults Maryland into global prominence in the equine sports world and compared favorably to similar prestigious events in England, France, Germany, and Australia. It is an annual international event and is expected to grow each year. The event designer, Ian Stark, is an Olympic medalist from Selkirk, Scotland. His challenging cross country course, which is the centerpiece of the event, made superb use of Fair Hill's rolling hills and varied terrain, receiving rave reviews from competitors, officials, and spectators. One competitor called it a "6 Star."

MDA helped to organize the SUSTA pavilion at the 2021 ANUGA trade show in Cologne, Germany. ANUGA is the largest trade show in the world and takes place every two years in October. With strict COVID-19 regulations, ANUGA welcomed visitors and offered a venue for face-to-face meetings, tastings, and sales. Space within the SUSTA pavilion was limited but included two Maryland-based companies. Although attendance was much lower than in past years, hosting a successful show was a major accomplishment.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- Canada
- The European Union
- The United Arab Emirates

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- MDA will host the planned inbound mission for forestry products. This has been scheduled for August 2022. With funding from FAS and SUSTA, MDA will also participate in a major foodservice show in Toronto to showcase Maryland seafood and value-added product to enhance it.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- The impact has been dramatic as international travel virtually ceased in 2021. Major international trade shows and missions were canceled. MDA worked with many companies to develop or refine their international marketing plans, to meet with SUSTA's in-market consultants virtually and to participate in virtual trade missions and trade shows.

Maryland Department of Environment

Key accomplishments:

- MDE held multiple meetings with Japan Science and Technology to discuss working with academia when developing policies.
- MDE met with the Israeli Embassy on Water Conservation.
- Secretary Grumbles visited the United Nation's Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland and discussed climate policy with policy makers from around the world.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- Japan
- Israel

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- MDE hopes to continue relations with Japan and Israel, as well as develop more international relationships to share our work and learn from what others have accomplished.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- The pandemic has slowed down international affairs as we have not had the same in person events as years prior.

Maryland Military Department

Key accomplishments:

- Brigadier General (BG) Adam Flasch (Director of the Maryland National Guard Joint Staff) traveled to Fort Benning, Georgia 8-9 April to attend the graduation of two Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) officers from the Maneuver Captain Career Course. While there, he met with other senior BiH officials who were also there for the graduation.
- In mid-April, The Adjutant General (TAG: Major General Timothy Gowen) held several telephonic conversations with the BiH Chief of the Ministry of Defense regarding the role of the military in supporting civil authorities during a pandemic.
- TAG traveled to Europe to visit US Army Europe (USAEUR: Wiesbaden, Germany) and BiH 19-25 June 2021. While at USAEUR Headquarters, he met with Major General Jarrard to discuss

Maryland National Guard (MDNG) participation in an exercise called DEFENDER EUROPE 23, COVID-19 operations, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization way ahead. While in BiH, TAG met with Lieutenant General Senad Mašović, BiH Chief of Defense (ChoD) regarding a variety of State Partnership Program (SPP) matters. This was TAG's first trip to BiH as TAG.

- TAG hosted a luncheon for the Estonian Ambassador, Kristjan Prikk, at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore on 15 September 2021. The occasion was to celebrate the arrival of the new Estonian defense attaché, Colonel (COL) Vahur Väljamäe.
- TAG traveled to Split, Croatia the week of 27 September to 1 October to attend the annual Adriatic Five (A-5, also known as the Adriatic Charter: Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, BiH, Montenegro, with Serbia, Slovenia, and Kosovo as observers).
- BG Adam Flasch attended the Northern Europe ChoD conference in Helsinki, Finland 29-30 September 2021. This annual meeting represents 12 European countries and is a platform for discussing the security environment of the Baltic Sea and Northern Europe while promoting dialogue and mutual understanding.
- TAG, BG Flasch, and the SPP Director met with COL Väljamäe and Mr. Kusti Salm, the Permanent Secretary of the Estonian Ministry of Defense, on October 19th, 2021. Mr. Salm was visiting Washington, DC for bilateral discussions with the US.
- Over the course of 2021, the Maryland National Guard (MDNG) supported a total of 22 multi-day familiarization events with Estonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). Most of these were conducted virtually. Due to the pandemic, 11 other planned events were either cancelled or conducted by Country Teams (Country Teams are made up of US Service Members already present within the area of operations, thus negating the need for international travel). For context, in non-pandemic times, the MDNG conducts approximately 60 events annually with Partner Nations. Although the MDNG supported far fewer events, the events held were nevertheless important: members of the Armed Forces of BiH came to Maryland particularly keen to understand how the military could support civil authorities in fighting the pandemic.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- Estonia
- Bosnia-Herzegovina

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- Mar 2022: SABER STRIKE 2022 (Saber Strike is an exercise hosted by United States Army Europe that takes place annually in the Baltic region. It focuses on improving multinational interoperability and command and control maneuver at brigade and lower levels. It is a three-dimensional exercise, containing a close air support component as a complement to ground forces.)
- May 2022: DEFENDER EUROPE 2022 (Defender Europe is an annual strategic exercise that tests the United States military's ability to deploy to Europe and fight there. It links several smaller, decentralized exercises together to simulate a division-level operation.)
- May 2022: HEDGEHOG 2022 (Hedgehog is a two-week Estonian Defense Force exercise held annually to test Estonian defenses and its ability to integrate the forces of other countries. It combines the use of land, air, and cyber systems throughout the exercise.)

- May 2023: SWIFT RESPONSE 2023 (Swift Response is a component of the annual DEFENDER EUROPE exercise.) While this exercise will occur in 2023, much of the planning for the exercise will occur in 2022.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- The pandemic continued to have a deleterious effect on international operations in 2021. Although the travel restrictions imposed in March 2020 were eventually eased somewhat for US Service Members as immunizations took hold, quarantine restrictions for Partner Nations continued to be a major drawback in holding physical events. The advent of the Delta variant and concerns about breakthrough, coupled with dramatic increases in Partner Nation caseloads as 2021 ended again slowed partnering events. Virtual events proved to be a poor substitute for in-person events due to the significant time difference between Europe and the United States.

Maryland Insurance Administration

Key accomplishments:

- EU-US Dialogue Project the National Association of Insurance Commissioners ("NAIC") selected Maryland Insurance Commissioner Kathleen A. Birrane as one of three U.S. representatives on the Steering Committee of the EU-US Insurance Dialogue Project. The NAIC, the Federal Insurance Office (FIO) of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) and the European Commission (EC) participate in the EU-U.S. Insurance Dialogue Project – an initiative started in 2012 to enhance cross-border cooperation and regulatory modernization to address global challenges facing the insurance industry. The value of this Project is in the sharing of supervisory practices and continued dialogue with our European counterparts. This collaboration helps build strong regulatory relationships to ensure that these lines of communication remain open, that information and best practices are exchanged, and that plans of action are coordinated efficiently and effectively.
- UN COP 26 Commissioner Birrane was asked by the NAIC to be one of its representatives on a panel sponsored by the United Nations' Environmental Program and, specifically, the UN-Convened Principles for Sustainable Insurance. The panel was an event part of the United Nations 26th Conference of the Parties (UN COP26) on November 3, 2021 ("Finance Day"). The panel focused on how the insurance sector was addressing risks related to climate change and climate-related financial risk, in particular. As the Chair of the Solvency Workstream of the NAIC Climate and Resiliency Task Force, Commissioner Birrane addressed the global focus on how insurance regulators are taking (and requiring insurers to take) climate risk into consideration as part of their solvency and prudential oversight. Commissioner Birrane overviewed the development of regulatory best practices approaches for both climate-related financial risk for insurers from a solvency perspective and climate risk mitigation driven by insurers in underwriting and risk financing. Commissioner Birrane also had an opportunity to address on a global platform what Maryland and the Hogan Administration are doing at the local level to mitigate climate-related risks and promote adaptation and resilience. With respect to insurance related regulation actions in Maryland, Commissioner Birrane mentioned the following in her remarks: Effective January 1, 2022, Maryland will begin to include questions related to

financial risk associated with climate change in its state specific questionnaire during tri-annual financial examinations of Maryland domestic insurers. Maryland expects to sponsor a virtual symposium on what climate risk means for the US insurance sector in June, 2022. This will leverage and update the work of the NAIC's Climate and Resilience Task Force and the EU-US Insurance Dialogue, as well as the work of the MCCC.

- Sustainable Insurance Forum (SIF) Maryland was admitted in the UN-Convened Sustainable Insurance Forum (SIF), as one of only five US jurisdictions that are currently members. Maryland joins a global network of 30+ international insurance supervisors, regulators, and authorities. SIF membership allows our Administration to address climate-related risks with an [inter-]national audience in the financial sector. SIF is a dynamic platform for international collaborative action on climate issues whose work includes research on emerging risks, knowledge-sharing on supervisory practices, high-level policy engagement, and joint supervisory statements. SIF is a capacity-building opportunity which would leverage international best practices to advance domestic initiatives in Maryland.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- European Union (EU)
- United Kingdom (UK)

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

EU-US Dialogue Project and Sustainable Insurance Forum (SIF) The EU-US Insurance Dialogue Project has introduced three new workstreams for 2022, which our Administration will actively collaborate with and learn from -- via Commissioner Birrane's leadership position within the Project's Steering Committee. These workstreams include: 1) the Technology and Innovation Workstream; 2) the Climate Risk and Financial Oversight Workstream; and 3) the Climate Risk and Resilience Workstream. Maryland, and the US, will share its experiences in these areas and develop its understanding and capacity -- through bilateral engagement and shared learning with the EU -within the areas of innovative technologies, modeling, and climate mitigation/adaptation. The Project's Technology and Innovation Workstream, led by the NAIC, is charged with monitoring and coordinating work in the areas of innovation, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. The work will inform recommendations for developing guidance to update the existing US regulatory framework for the use of big data and artificial intelligence in the insurance industry, as well as the speed of innovation. The Project's Climate Risk and Financial Oversight Workstream will focus on climate risk disclosures and other financial surveillance in the US and EU. Through collaborative engagement, recommendations will be forwarded for potential enhancements to the existing financial surveillance, disclosure, and solvency tools. The Project's Climate Risk and Resilience Workstream is charged with identifying sustainability, resilience and mitigation issues and evaluating potential solutions related to the insurance industry, including through innovative technology and climate catastrophe modeling. The Sustainable Insurance Forum (SIF) is in the process of setting its next two-year plan. As a member, Maryland would have an opportunity to shape that plan in support of our domestic initiatives relating to sustainability. Sustainable insurance is a strategic approach where all activities in the insurance value chain are conducted in a responsible and forward-looking manner by identifying, assessing, managing, and monitoring risks and opportunities associated with environmental, social and governance issues.

Maryland Department of Planning

Key accomplishments:

- The Maryland Department of Planning finished its work on the 2020 Census. The timeframe was extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Maryland finished 9th in the nation for census self-response. We successfully partnered with the federal government, local governments, state agencies, non-profit organizations, the business community, the faith-based community, and other interested parties. Planning wishes to thank all our partners who made the 2020 Census a success!

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- Maryland is one of the only states in the country that has Planning as a cabinet-level agency. As a result, we would receive requests for international visitations to our offices to understand the agency and its relationship to local jurisdictions. The pandemic reduced international travel, so Planning hasn't received any such requests since 2019.

Governor's Office of Community Initiatives

Key accomplishments:

Building on the success of A Baltimore Port of Entry Case Study trade conference, Commissioner O. Felix Obi helped facilitate a trade and investment Working Group with representation from The Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA), the Prince Georges County and City of Baltimore Economic Development Corporation, Prosper Africa Initiative, and the Maryland Dept of Commerce. The principal goal of the Working Group is to facilitate two-way trade and investment between Maryland businesses and African Union member states. As a first major outcome, Mr. Jordan Kayloe, Director, Air Service Development at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, led the effort to establish an Air Senegal flight from BWI Marshall Airport (through JFK) to Dakar, Senegal, a key West Africa trade hub. The Air Senegal flight has also strengthened employment at BWI Airport and enhanced the quality of international travel for Marylanders.

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- African Union

Major international goals, projects or events upcoming for 2022:

- The governor's ethnic commissions are working on a program involving the Maryland Department of Health, and COVID specialists from several nations to exchange best practices regarding immunizations. The event is expected to happen in early 2022.
- As part of GOCI's ongoing mission, we will continue to reach out to foreign embassy personnel that we regularly encounter during Ethnic Community events in and around Washington D.C.
- Appointees to the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs are undertaking various individual efforts to assist in the relocation and settlement of Afghan refugees. Consolidating these efforts through a central body is an ongoing goal of the commission, and its community partners.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- Our outreach efforts have been severely depleted by the lack of in-person interactions; however, the state's vaccination efforts are showing through as an uptick in in-person events over the last few months.

Office of the Lt. Governor

Key accomplishments:

- Medica/Europe Trade Mission - November 2021
- Continued relationships with Hauts-de-France & Austria

List top 3 most important regions/countries dealt with in 2021:

- Germany
- United Kingdom
- France

Major international goals, projects, or events upcoming for 2022:

- Any follow up from Europe Trade Mission. Hauts-de-France education partnership; proposed trip to Maryland Summer of 2022.

What impact has the pandemic had on the agency's international affairs?

- We did not travel as much, and delegations did not travel here. First international travel for the office since COVID was in November 2021.

Photo Library



All the students in St. Mary's County who were awarded the Seal of Biliteracy in 2021 (MSDE)

Maryland Secretary of Higher Education Dr. James D. Fielder with Lieutenant Governor of Maryland Boyd Rutherford during a Back-to-School Summit and Vaccination Clinic at FedEx Field (MHEC)





Governor Hogan's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs director Christina Poy and several appointees supporting the Maryland Five Star Event (GOCI)

Secretary of State Wobensmith and African Affairs Commissioner Felix Obi meeting with the 1st female Ambassador to the US from the Republic of Nigeria (GOCI)



MD SEAL OF BILITERACY

MCPS students lead Maryland

MCPS Graduates earned 1697
Seals of Biliteracy in 2021.
The Seal recognizes high levels of
proficiency in English and one or
more additional languages.

*Languages
are an
asset*

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN TO JUNIORS & SENIORS

Prove your proficiency in your home, heritage, or learned language
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Will the next medal be for you?





TAG hosted a luncheon for the Estonian Ambassador, Kristjan Prikk, at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore on 15 September 2021. The occasion was to celebrate the arrival of the new Estonian defense attaché, Colonel (COL) Vahur Väljamäe. (MIL)

Maryland National Guard & State Partnership Program (SPP) at Maneuver Center of Excellence (McoE) (MIL)



Estonian Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) Direct Maryland Air National Guard (MDANG) A-10s (MIL)



Sharing Best Practices with Bosnia
Herzegovina's Air Force (AFBiH) (MIL)

One of the digital ads for Flying Dog Brewery from
Frederick, MD. (MDA)



A rider and horse on the inaugural 5 Star
at Fair Hill course. (MDA)



ANUGA
Food Fair
2021
opened in
Cologne,
Germany
(MDA)



Jessica Reynolds, Senior Director for the Maryland Commerce Office of International Investment & Trade, accepts the 2021 President's "E-Star" Award for Export Service. (Commerce)



Lt. Governor
Boyd
Rutherford
cuts the ribbon
at Maryland's
delegation
booth for the
MEDICA 2021
Trade Fair in
Dusseldorf,
Germany.
(Commerce)



First Lady
Yumi Hogan
signs a renewed
economic
development
cooperative
agreement with
the President of
the Korea
SMEs and
Startups
Agency
(KOSME),
Hakdo Kim.
(Commerce)